

IR is over, but FOD checks remain

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Some of you may still be wondering after the initial response inspection (IR) what are foreign object damage (FOD)

checks and why are they important to me?

Besides being required by ANGI 21-101, FOD's, are anything such as a small pebble, rock, nut, washer, etc., that could be ingested into an aircraft engine. Ingested objects end up damaging the internal engine parts. Such occurrences day after day in the Air Force cost the units and taxpayers millions of dollars due to the resulting damage to the engine.

Worse case scenarios result in failed engines during critical phases of flight. Therefore, it is our responsibility to minimize the possibility of such an event happening.

At the 179th AW, our logistics group already does two things to help minimize our FOD. One, they get personnel together periodically and walk the ramp where the planes sit. Items are picked up and disposed of off the flight line where they will not become a hazard again.

Second, our LG runs the "FOD Boss." Essentially, this item is a sweeper of sorts. It is dragged behind a vehicle to create a smooth surface for our aircraft to operate on. This not only protects the aircraft, but also protects personnel from objects that could be propelled by the thrust of the aircraft.

What is my part in this you ask?

With the IR, we instituted vehicle FOD checks. A FOD check refers to a physical inspection of the vehicle you are driving and any vehicle or equipment you may be towing.

This inspection entails you or a passenger getting out of the vehicle, looking the vehicle over for any loose part(s). Second, tires should be inspected. An inspection includes looking to see that the tire is held on by four lug nuts, getting up close and inspecting the tires for pebbles imbedded within the tire tread. Any foreign objects should be thrown away in an area away from the flightline.

Personnel should also check any shelf like areas on the undercarriage which may temporarily hold rocks of other items which could dislodge during stopping, starting, turning, etc.

Finally, the vehicle should be driven forward slightly to finish checking the tires.

Our FOD check points for vehicles are now clearly marked thanks to civil engineering. The entry control points near maintenance hangar 409 are both FOD check-points. One of the other two check-points can be found along our flight line road (Sabre Road), on the west bound lane, adjacent to the aircraft maintenance hangar, building 102.

If you leave these areas and return, you are required to perform the FOD checks again. This is true no matter where else your vehicle goes outside of our FOD areas or no matter how long the vehicle remains outside the area.

Finally, in an effort to minimize the traffic and FOD potential along the flight line, the area prior to the fire department, all the way down to between the maintenance hangar (Building 102) and the current Operations building, is restricted to government vehicles only.

In the past access to the flight line road was opened because there was no other way to get to some areas of the base. Now, however, that is not the case. Cutting off privately owned vehicles in this area serves two purposes. As mentioned previously, it minimizes our FOD potential. Second, it provides additional security to our flight line!

Security forces will soon consider POV's out of place in this area and a possible threat to our assets that they are entrusted to protect. In our post 9-11 world, the quicker we identify a threat, the better the chance we have to prevent it from causing damage!

I would ask each and every one of you to start helping out in these areas. Don't drive your POV's on the flight line road between the fire department and the maintenance hangar – building 102.

Second, if you are driving a government vehicle through this area, perform a proper FOD check. It only takes a few minutes. I don't know of any of us that are in that big of a rush on our base that we cannot afford to minimize the chances of damaging one of our aircraft engines and possibly creating an in-flight emergency.

Remember, you might be on that aircraft!

Bataan memorial march

In March, the Army ROTC Department of New Mexico in conjunction with the New Mexico Guard is hosting the Bataan Memorial March.

This 26.2 mile march began in 1988 as a means of honoring those men and women who were responsible for the defense of the islands of Luzon, Corregidor and the harbors of the Philippines.

If you are interested in participating or want more information contact Lt. Col. Mark Lynskey at 419-520-6284 (DSN 696-6284).